

withdraw as presiding officer in a proceeding if the presiding officer deems himself or herself to be disqualified.

(e) A presiding officer may be requested to withdraw at any time prior to the recommended decision. Upon the filing by an interested person in good faith of a timely and sufficient affidavit alleging the presiding officer's personal bias, malice, conflict of interest or other basis which might result in prejudice to a party, the hearing shall recess. The Assistant Administrator shall immediately determine the matter as a part of the record and decision in the proceeding, after making such investigation or holding such hearings, or both, as the Assistant Administrator may deem appropriate in the circumstances.

§ 228.7 Direct testimony submitted as written documents.

(a) Unless otherwise specified, all direct testimony, including accompanying exhibits, must be submitted to the presiding officer in writing no later than the dates specified in the notice of the hearing (§ 228.4), the final hearing agenda (§ 228.12), or within 15 days after the conclusion of the prehearing conference (§ 228.14) as the case may be. All direct testimony shall be in affidavit form and exhibits constituting part of such testimony, referred to in the affidavit and made a part thereof, must be attached to the affidavit. Direct testimony submitted with exhibits must state the issue to which the exhibit relates; if no such statement is made, the presiding officer shall determine the relevance of the exhibit to the issues published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(b) The direct testimony submitted shall contain:

(1) A concise statement of the witness' interest in the proceeding and his position regarding the issues presented. If the direct testimony is presented by a witness who is not a party, the witness shall state the witness' relationship to the party; and

(2) Facts that are relevant and material.

(c) The direct testimony may propose issues of fact not defined in the notice of the hearing and the reason(s) why such issues should be considered at the hearing.

(d) Ten copies of all direct testimony must be submitted unless the notice of the hearing specifies otherwise.

(e) Upon receipt, direct testimony shall be assigned a number and stamped with that number and the docket number.

(f) Contemporaneous with the publication of the notice of hearing, the Assistant Administrator's direct testimony in support of the proposed regulations and waiver, where applicable, shall be available for public inspection as specified in the notice of hearing. The Assistant Administrator may submit additional direct testimony during the time periods allowed for submission of such testimony by witnesses.

§ 228.8 Mailing address.

Unless otherwise specified in the notice of hearing, all direct testimony shall be addressed to the Presiding Officer, c/o Assistant Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. All affidavits and exhibits shall be clearly marked with the docket number of the proceedings.

§ 228.9 Inspection and copying of documents.

Any document in a file pertaining to any hearing authorized by this subpart or any document forming part of the record of such a hearing may be inspected and/or copied in the Office of the Assistant Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910—unless the file is in the care and custody of the presiding officer, in which case the presiding officer shall notify the parties as to where and when the record may be inspected.

§ 228.10 Ex parte communications.

(a) After notice of a hearing is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, all communications, whether oral or written, involving any substantive or procedural issue and directed either to the presiding officer or to the Assistant Administrator, Deputy Assistant Administrator, or Chief of the Marine Mammal Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, without reference to these rules of procedure, shall be deemed ex parte communications and